

GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
MONTHLY NARRATIVE: May 1993

A. HIGHLIGHTS

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Weather conditions in May were somewhat different from the cool and wet conditions present through at least part of April. May was generally mild and dry. Less than an inch of precipitation was recorded and sunshine was the rule rather than the exception. A high temperature of 90 degrees was recorded on the 11th. The drying conditions were welcomed after the flooding which occurred well into mid-late April.

D. PLANNING

6. Other

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

5/11 - A Regional Office team consisting of Peter Allen, Michelle Dowling, Chris Murphy, and Janice Henning visited GRM to conduct a review of imprest, property mgmt. and procurement records for the station. Recommendations for changes were discussed on site, most were of a minor nature and involved making administrative or procedural changes. A follow-up hard copy of the teams recommendations was not received by months end.

5/14 - ROS Frisque completed a section 504 review with George Cortes of the Human Resources Division. Station needs were discussed as well as improvements to our existing accessibility facilities.

5/17-21 and 5/27-28 - MGR. Moses, ROS Frisque, and Bio. Tech. Burke were at Monomoy NWR to conduct gull control on portions of South Monomoy ialand. The operation involved removal of herring and black backed gulls from traditional piping plover and tern nesting areas. ROS Ware had previously located nesting and territorial plovers and terns and monitored their response to the control activities.

2. Master Plan

4. Volunteer Program

ORP Kennedy advertised for new volunteers to attend an orientation workshop on May 1. Only one volunteer attended the slide program and orientation.

ORP Kennedy gave a presentation about the FWS and John Hay NWR to NH State Park Volunteers at John Hay Refuge on May 18.

Refuge and NFWF staff met with Volunteer Gerry Tolman regarding the fundraising effort to purchase the aquatic weed harvester on May 25.

6. Safety

All station fire extinguishers were inspected and charged as needed.

F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

2. Wetlands

Floodplain marshes recovered from the extensive flooding present in April. Little damage to emergent vegetation was visible, but muskrat houses were virtually eliminated from the floodplain and the Concord impoundments by the flooding.

G. WILDLIFE

2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

3. Waterfowl

Waterfowl were present in good numbers through the first half of the month, and had greatly diminished by month's end. Wood ducks are present and nesting in the Concord impoundments despite inundation of most of the wood duck houses in April.

7. Other Migratory Birds

In addition to woodcock many passerines were present in May, some migrating through others establishing nesting territories. Brown thrashers, palm warblers, yellow rumped warblers, N. Orioles, bobolinks, kingbirds, and veerys were all present.

10. Resident Species

Beaver were active at the Strand property in May. Three river otters were recorded at the Concord impoundments during a morning waterfowl survey.

Turtle trapper John Rogers began removing snapping turtles from portions of the refuge, primarily the Concord impoundments in May. The turtle removal effort is designed to help improve waterfowl brood survival. The snapper is a primary predator on young waterfowl, especially in the area of the Concord impoundments where wood duck boxes are provided to augment a lack of natural cavities. Turtles are individually captured using a long hook, and are bagged in wet burlap. The process does not use trot lines or other capture methods which might affect non-target species. A total 124 snapping turtles were removed in May.

H. PUBLIC USE

1. General

SVT conducted a Bluebird Day event at the Visitor Center on May 23.

Four additional business meetings were held in May and attended by approximately 70 people.

Bio. Tech Burke conducted a woodcock walk in May and was attended by approx. 20 people. Woodcock were observed on the ground as well as in the air.

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

Twenty school or scout groups, with a total of 926 students and teachers visited Great Meadows in May. UMASS also conducted a Wetlands Workshop for 30 people on May 1.

3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers

Concord teacher Bob Fardy conducted his annual teacher training on May 12.

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

ORP Kennedy met with Volunteers Bob Reed and Rona Balco to plan the Oxbow self-guided trail leaflet on May 18. Bob provided his naturalist expertise and Rona took notes and will draft text.

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

The annual Wildlife and Nature Arts and Crafts Show and Sale was held at First Parish in Concord on May 15. Approximately 200 visitors attended.

7. Other Interpretive Programs

ORP Kennedy was interviewed by WBZ radio personality Dave Maynard about the Wildlife and Nature Arts and Crafts Show for a regular feature called "New England Weekend". The 2 minute spot aired the day of the event and was successful in generating increased attendance.

11. Wildlife Observation

12. Other Wildlife Oriented Recreation

17. Law Enforcement

FI Kennedy provided firearms qualification and training to seasonal LE Officers from Ninigret and Parker River NWRs at Ft. Devens on May 21. FI Drauszewski assisted.

The refuge loaned one .357 cal. service revolver to Minute Man NHP for use this summer for one of their season law enforcement officers.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

8. Other

Work continues on the Concord restrooms. Toilets and urinals have been installed at proper heights, metal door jambs and doors have been installed, silt fencing was installed late in May in preparation for access drive work in early June.

Repair work on the Concord dikes is progressing well. Removal of floating cattail mats from the dike tops was completed in early May. Some filling of holes and light re-surfacing was also completed this month.

Repairs to the floating river signs was completed in May.

Bio.Tech. Burke was detailed to Monomoy for varying lengths of time to assist with repairs to the stairs and to assist with posting of closed areas.

The station GMC dump truck repair and repainting was finished in early May. The dump truck was exchanged for the larger Mack dump truck at Parker River NWR. The larger truck will allow the station to better handle transport of our dozer to various satellite stations. In addition to the truck exchange, respective "low boy" trailers were also exchanged. Transfer of property information was also completed.